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Information

Professional Services Committee

Discussion of Elementary Subject Matter Programs

Executive Summary: This agenda item continues the discussion begun in 2007 on the SB 2042 reform and the work that is still to be completed. In particular, this item provides information on the current status of Elementary Subject Matter Programs in light of the No Child Left Behind requirement that all Multiple Subject candidates pass the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination, and includes information gathered from institutions currently approved to offer an Elementary Subject Matter (ESM) program.

Recommended Action: For information only

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Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal: 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation and performance of professional educators and for the accreditation of credential programs

December 2008

Discussion of Elementary Subject Matter Programs

Introduction

This agenda item continues the discussion begun in 2007 relating to the SB 2042 (Chap. 548, Stats. 1998) reform. This item presents additional information on Elementary Subject Matter Programs and requests direction from the Commission about the appropriate next steps in reference to Elementary Subject Matter programs.

Background

A unique feature of the SB 2042 reform was the opportunity to develop three sets of program standards simultaneously (Subject Matter Preparation, Preliminary Teacher Preparation, and Teacher Induction) so that the three sets of standards would be coherent, would build upon and reinforce each other, and would provide a logical and seamless transition for teacher candidates throughout their subject matter preparation, their pedagogical preparation, and their induction in their initial two years on the job.

Beginning in March 2007, staff presented a number of agenda items related to the accomplishments and unfinished work of the SB 2042 reform. Following each of the introductory items, staff has worked to address the unfinished work related to each topic.

March 2007: Overview of SB 2042 Reform, Work Completed to Date, and Work Remaining
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2007-03/2007-03-6A.pdf>

April 2007: Preliminary Teacher Preparation
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2007-04/2007-04-6D.pdf>

June 2007: Induction and the Clear Credential Requirements
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2007-06/2007-06-6C.pdf>

August 2007: Subject Matter Preparation
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2007-08/2007-08-7E.pdf>

One of the last issues in need of Commission attention is the issue of elementary subject matter preparation. Although the Commission acted in recent years to make changes to conform with the No Child Left Behind Act, the issue around the long term status of these programs remains unaddressed at this time.

Subject Matter Preparation

Historically, the Education Code has provided two routes for individuals to satisfy the subject matter requirement since the Ryan Act of 1970 (Chap. 557, Stats. 1970). The Ryan Act instituted a requirement that all candidates for a Multiple or Single Subject Teaching Credential pass a subject matter examination in addition to completing an approved professional teacher

preparation (pedagogy) program. However, the Ryan Act also provided for an alternative to the subject matter examination requirement. This option authorized colleges and universities to design and implement subject matter programs approved by the Commission that would “waive” the examination by providing a coursework route to establishing subject matter competence.

Over the years, Commission policies have directed that the two routes ensure content knowledge of individuals preparing to become teachers and that the content is closely related to the curriculum of the public schools. As part of SB 2042, the two options available to candidates to satisfy the subject matter requirement were brought into even closer alignment by using one set of subject matter requirements (SMRs) for the development of both the examination and the program standards. In addition, SB 2042 required that both the examination and the program routes be aligned to the K-12 student academic content standards and frameworks.

Typically subject matter preparation occurs through a candidate's undergraduate coursework. The coursework may be offered through an approved subject matter program or as coursework that is part of the bachelor's degree. However, colleges and universities that intended to offer subject matter preparation to undergraduate students in lieu of the examination were required to meet the adopted subject matter standards in order to be recognized by the Commission for this purpose. Prior to 2004, candidates for a multiple subject credential who did not complete an approved subject matter program that met the adopted subject matter program standards had to take and pass a subject matter examination (currently the California Subject Examinations for Teachers-CSET Multiple Subjects) to meet the subject matter requirement.

Elementary Subject Matter (ESM) Preparation

The standards and content specifications for elementary subject matter were developed by the Elementary Subject Matter Advisory Panel and adopted by the Commission in September 2001. The advisory panel consisted of 26 members, including teachers, professors, and curriculum specialists in the seven content areas required by law (mathematics, science, history/social science, English/language arts, visual and performing arts, physical education and human development). The panel met for a sixteen-month period to study the state-adopted academic content standards for students and state-adopted frameworks, hear presentations from the developers of these standards and frameworks, and meet with panels of liberal studies program coordinators to discuss changes needed in subject matter programs. The subject matter examination, *CSET: Multiple Subject*, and the subject matter program standards were both developed from the content specifications that were developed by the Elementary Subject Matter Advisory Panel.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB) required all students be taught by teachers deemed to be “highly qualified” by 2006-07. The federal law specified three basic requirements for an individual to be identified as highly qualified: that the teacher must 1) hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree, 2) have either passed a state examination or hold a degree in the content area he or she will teach, and 3) hold a valid teaching credential for the state where the individual teaches. Each state was responsible for putting procedures in place to implement NCLB within the state. In California, the State Board of Education (SBE) was the entity responsible for developing and submitting California's plan to comply with NCLB.

The SBE decided that all multiple subject teachers new to the profession must pass an examination to satisfy the second requirement of the NCLB legislation. For single subject teachers, either a bachelor's degree or the passage of an examination are options, because there are bachelor's degrees in the content the teacher is going to teach. (In California, the Commission requires the completion of an approved program rather than just a bachelor's degree in the subject to ensure the individual's knowledge of the range of content taught in the public schools.) Multiple subject teachers are required to teach reading, language arts, mathematics, history and social science, science, visual and performing arts, and physical education. Although Liberal Studies majors may include each of these disciplines, elementary subject matter programs approved by the Commission have specified standards that ensure that each of the topics identified above are covered in the program in addition to providing early field experiences in the public schools and content in the area of human development. But in 2003 the SBE determined that an approved elementary subject matter program would not satisfy the NCLB requirement in California and that in the future all prospective multiple subject teachers must pass the subject matter examination.

In order to align credential requirements with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the Commission took action that individuals completing approved elementary subject matter preparation programs would no longer be eligible for an examination waiver. This action triggered an end to the examination waiver provided in Education Code Section 44310 for multiple subject credential candidates. Therefore as of July 1, 2004 all multiple subject candidates must pass the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination prior to taking responsibility for whole class instruction during student teaching or becoming the teacher of record as an intern.

At the time the Commission took the above action, it had already approved thirty Elementary Subject Matter Preparation Programs (see Appendix A). Although these programs have been officially approved, completion of the program no longer satisfies the subject matter requirement. Staff has not conducted reviews of proposed elementary subject matter programs since the Commission took action to require multiple subject candidates to pass the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination.

Commission Presentations Related to ESM Programs

A study session was presented to the Commission in May 2004 that reviewed the history of subject matter preparation in California and posed a number of questions related to the approval of subject matter preparation programs (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2004-05/may-2004-6A.pdf>):

- Why does the Commission review and approve subject matter programs?
- Should the Commission continue to review and approve subject matter programs?
- Should there be a distinction in Commission policy concerning reviewing and approving elementary subject matter programs and single subject matter programs?
- What options could the Commission consider if it continues to review elementary subject matter programs?

At the study session, the questions above were discussed by the Commission and many stakeholders, but no action was taken.

As mentioned earlier in this item, the Commission discussed the issue of Elementary Subject Matter programs at its August 2007 meeting. Options the Commission discussed included: (1) continuing to review and approve ESM programs, (2) completing a different type and level of review and recognizing ESM programs, or (3) not reviewing, approving or endorsing ESM programs. Allowing individuals to complete the ESM program in lieu of the CSET: Multiple Subjects was not an option given California's implementation of the federal NCLB requirements. California's policy remains unchanged at this time.

During the discussion in August 2007, the Commission expressed interest in continuing to review ESM programs and possibly recognizing programs that meet the Commission's adopted standards. The Commission also expressed support for subject matter programs and the completion of coursework. In addition during the discussion the Commission posed a question for possible study related to the value of a prospective multiple subject teacher completing an ESM program in addition to passing the CSET: MS examination. The Commission's credential database does not have data that would allow staff to investigate this question. However, one ESM survey respondent did provide the following information:

We have examined the figures we receive for students taking the CSET: MS. Around 75% of (our) Liberal Studies (candidates) pass all three parts, around 70% of Child Development students who have done our CTC approved teacher prep track pass all parts, but only 33% of students from other majors who take the CSET and report to our School of Education pass all parts.

Elementary Subject Matter Survey

Staff developed a survey to gather information from institutions that currently have an approved ESM program and institutions that do not have an approved ESM program, but are involved in the preparation of multiple subject teachers. The survey was available beginning in early October 2008 and responses were collected through the first week of November 2008. Information regarding the ESM survey was shared through the Professional Services Division's weekly email (PSD News) which is sent to all approved institutions including the deans, associate deans and program coordinators at the institutions and all stakeholders who have subscribed to the e-newsletter. In addition, information about the survey and a request for an individual from the institution to complete the survey was sent to all institutions with an approved ESM program. Summary information from the survey is presented in Appendix B of this item.

Forty individuals submitted information for the ESM survey representing 27 different institutions (12 CSUs and 15 private colleges or universities). The majority of respondents state that their institutions offer a Liberal Studies major and this is one of the majors that prospective elementary school teachers complete. All but one respondent from institutions with an approved ESM program stated that they are still offering the ESM program. About half of the respondents report that their institutions have modified how they provide content preparation to prospective multiple subject teachers since 2004 but all respond that the modifications have been minor and the programs still meet the content specifications while preparing individuals for the CSET: MS examination.

Many respondents expressed interest in revisiting the issue of completion of an approved ESM program waiving the requirement to pass the examination. The No Child Left Behind Act was

the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA is overdue to be reauthorized and it is not known at this time if there will be any change in the federal law. Below is a sample of comments received on the survey:

I think they (ESM Programs) are valuable as preparation and education for teaching, and should NOT be thought of as test preparation. It would be best, in fact, to bring back waivers which would motivate more students to take the appropriate course of study.

Our institution will continue to offer the Liberal Studies (ESM) major for undergraduates preparing for a multiple subject credential. Much work and care went into developing the coursework, making sure courses covered the competencies on the CSET. However, we do not need to have this major approved by the CTC to keep it alive and well. Even a limited approval process would involve, I'm sure, accreditation review of some kind. We would rather concentrate our investment of time in further developing and enhancing a rigorous review process for our MS, SS and Admin credential programs. The best review tool for our Liberal Studies program is our students' ability to pass the CSET. To date our students are doing well, which indicates the coursework has remained on track and is preparing our students.

I think having a test as the only option is creating a barrier for some students who are quite prepared to be great teachers.

We need to return to the "waiver" program for approved majors. It is clear that all Liberal Studies majors experienced a substantial drop in number of individuals as soon as the CSET was required of all students. (Our program dropped from 2200 to 1400 LS majors in a three year period following the implementation of CSET.) Many students got the message that any major would do and that Liberal Studies majors were no longer needed or appropriate.... And, of course, a great number of students were discouraged by yet another barrier exam being placed before them, especially recent immigrants and those for who English is not their first language.

Possible Actions Related to ESM Programs the Commission Could Consider

Although issues related to ESM programs have been discussed at previous Commission meetings, no actions have been taken. Approved ESM programs and other institutions interested in having an approved or recognized ESM program have requested an update on how the Commission plans to resolve the issues related to ESM programs.

Approval of Additional ESM Programs

Commission approval of a program usually indicates specific rights and responsibilities for the sponsoring institution. With educator preparation programs, it indicates that the institution may offer the program and recommend individuals for a credential and requires the institution and the program to participate in the Commission's accreditation system. With subject matter programs, Commission approval waives the requirement for an individual who has completed the approved

program to take and pass the subject matter examination to satisfy the subject matter requirement.

Staff suggests that it may not be reasonable for the Commission to approve additional ESM programs since completion of the ESM program no longer waives the requirement to pass the subject matter examination. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission consider not approving additional ESM programs.

Status of Currently Approved ESM Programs

Maintaining approved ESM programs may not serve a useful Commission purpose since completion of the ESM program no longer waives the requirement to pass the subject matter examination. But several institutions expressed an interest in having standards that guide their programs designed to provide content to individuals who plan to become elementary school teachers. The adopted ESM standards are fully aligned with the K-8 academic content standards and address the range of content a multiple subject teacher must understand. One respondent stated the following:

Without ESM standards, it would be more difficult to give our Arts & Humanities colleagues clear guidelines or rationale for coursework in their departments. "Recognition" might help this, as would a clear institutional statement of purpose for the program that is CTC approved.

Therefore, staff suggests that the Commission consider changing its "approval" of the thirty currently approved ESM programs to another term such as "recognized." The new term would indicate that the Commission has reviewed the program and found that the program is aligned with the adopted subject matter requirements but completion of the program does not waive the requirement that the individual pass the CSET: MS examination.

Recognition of Additional ESM Programs

At the August 2007 meeting, there was interest expressed by some Commissioners in having ESM programs that are endorsed or recognized by the Commission. The information collected from stakeholders indicates that some institutions would be interested in offering an ESM program that is recognized or endorsed by the Commission as aligned to the elementary subject matter requirements. Other institutions expressed concerns about the program costs in these budgetary times and did not believe that they would be able to offer a recognized program. If the currently approved ESM programs are changed from being "approved" to being "recognized," it seems only fair to allow additional ESM programs to be "recognized." The specific procedures for the review of programs to be recognized would need to be developed.

Therefore staff suggests that the Commission consider directing staff to begin facilitating the review of additional ESM programs and recognizing those programs that successfully complete the review process.

Staff Direction

If after discussion the Commission believes that some or all of the staff suggestions have merit, the Commission could direct staff to bring an action item relating to ESM programs to a future Commission meeting.

Appendix A

Institutions Approved to Offer Elementary Subject Matter Programs¹

CSU Bakersfield	Concordia University
CSU Chico	Dominican University
CSU Fullerton	Fresno Pacific University
CSU Los Angeles	Holy Names University
CSU Monterey Bay	InterAmerican College
CSU Northridge	Loyola Marymount University
CSU San Diego	Masters College
CSU San Jose	Mount St. Mary's University
CSU Stanislaus	National University
Azusa Pacific University	National Hispanic University
Bethany College	Notre Dame De Namur University
Biola University	Pepperdine University
Cal Lutheran University	Pt. Loma Nazarene University
California Baptist University	University of San Diego
Chapman University	University of La Verne

- 1. The above institutions were approved to offer elementary subject matter preparation programs prior to Commission action in October 2003 to require passage of the CSET: Multiple Subjects Examination for all candidates.*

Appendix B

Elementary Subject Matter Survey Responses

Provided below are the questions and a summary of the responses to the Elementary Subject Matter (ESM) Survey. The questions addressed 4 major issues related to ESM preparation.

- 1) Institution's current undergraduate preparation for elementary school teachers
- 2) Institution's interest in having, or continuing to have, an approved or recognized Elementary Subject Matter program
- 3) For institutions still offering an ESM program, please indicate how closely aligned each of the following content areas in your current ESM program is to the course of study described in your ESM program application that was approved by the Commission
- 4) Advising for undergraduates who indicate they want to be elementary teachers


1) Questions related to the institution's current undergraduate preparation for elementary school teachers:

Survey Questions	Responses		
	Yes	No	No response
Does your institution offer a Liberal Studies major?	35 92.1 %	3 7.9 %	2
Since 2004, have you changed or modified how you prepare prospective multiple subject teachers in the content areas for their credential?	20 51.3 %	19 48.7 %	1
Do you offer coursework or other specific experiences to help candidates prepare for the CSET:MS examination?	24 64.9 %	13 35.1 %	3

2) Questions related to the institution's interest in having, or continuing to have, an approved or recognized Elementary Subject Matter program:

Survey Questions	Responses		
	Yes	No	Do not know
Did your institution sponsor a Commission-approved Elementary Subject Matter program (aka Liberal Studies Waiver Program) prior to the SB 2042 standards?	30 85.7 %	2 5.7 %	3 8.6 %
Did your institution submit an Elementary Subject Matter program under the 2001 Standards--SB 2042--for Commission review and approval during 2002-04?	33 94.3 %	1 2.9 %	1 2.9 %
Did your SB 2042 Elementary Subject Matter Program receive Commission approval?	32 91.4 %	2 5.7 %	1 2.9 %
Are you still operating the ESM program approved by the Commission?	30 96.8 %	1 3.2 %	0 0.0 %
Would your institution be interested in having a Commission-Recognized Elementary Subject Matter Program?	19 55.9 %	5 14.7 %	10 29.4 %

3) For institutions still offering an ESM program, please indicate how closely aligned each of the following content areas in your current ESM program is to the course of study described in your ESM program application that was approved by the Commission

Domains	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div>Not at all Aligned</div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div>Completely Aligned</div> </div>					
Reading, Language, and Literature	0	0	0	1	4	26
History and Social Science	0	0	0	1	2	27
Mathematics	0	0	0	1	1	29
Science	0	0	0	2	2	27
Visual and Performing Arts	1	0	0	2	2	26
Physical Education	0	1	0	1	3	26
Human Development	0	0	0	1	2	28

4) In advising undergraduates who indicate they want to become elementary teachers

how strongly do you advise prospective teachers to complete your approved program or the equivalent?	Not to complete the ESM program or its equivalent	That the courses are available, but do not promote enrollment	To complete the ESM program or its equivalent
	1	0	31